

An Inquiry into the Nature of Rādhā's  
Handmaids  
(Mañjarī-svarūpa-nirūpaṇa)  
Version: 0.1

by  
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translated from Bengali  
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# Translator’s Preface

It may be asked why this relatively recent work on an aspect of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava theology should be selected for translation. It is not a modern treatment of theology, but one that is extremely traditional in its approach: its purpose is to flesh out that which Gauḍīya practitioners have for generations accepted as the ultimate goal of their practice. However, as Kuṇja Bihārī Dāśjī himself explains in his introduction, although the concept of *mañjarī-bhāva* is the highest ideal of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism, it was not written about as a topic in its own right by the authors of the Gauḍīya canon.

The word *mañjarī* in its sense as a servant-girl of Rādhā does not seem to have been used anywhere prior to Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmin’s writings and even then it is not found in a large number of his works such as *Vidagdha-mādhava*, *Lalita-mādhava*, *Dāna-keli-kaumudī*, *Haṁsa-dūta*, *Uddhava-sandeśa*, *Laghu-bhāgavatāmṛta*, etc. The mood of the mañjarīs, called *bhāvollāsā-rati* has been identified and defined in the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, written in 1463 Śaka, i.e., AD 1541, but the word mañjarī itself is nowhere used. In fact, the first occurrence of the term in the corpus of Rūpa’s oeuvre is in *Ujjvala-nīlamanī*, which was likely finished in 1464 or 1465 Śaka, i.e. AD 1542-3. There the names of Kastūrī Mañjarī, Maṇi Mañjarī and Lavaṅga Mañjarī are found and they are identified as Rādhā’s maid-servants.

In the *Rādhā-kṛṣṇa-gaṇoddeśa-dīpikā*, which was written in 1472 Śaka, i.e. AD 1550, the names of eighteen chief mañjarīs are listed. Of these, the first name mentioned is that of Rūpa Mañjarī. Rūpa Gosvāmin is identified as an incarnation of Rūpa Mañjarī in the *Gaura-gaṇoddeśa-dīpikā* of Kavi Karnaṇpūra (AD 1571) and it is thus felt that out of humility he did not write about her in any work prior to the *Rādhā-kṛṣṇa-gaṇoddeśa-dīpikā*, but in this, his very last book, he could not avoid mentioning her name. Another

early occurrence of the term is found in Jīva Gosvāmin's *Mādhava-mahotsava* (AD 1555), where the names of Kastūrī Mañjarī and others are mentioned.

Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmin worshipped the Divine Couple as a follower of Rūpa Mañjarī, as is clear from his *Stavāvalī*. Indeed, it is evident from a verse in the *Vilāpa-kusumāñjalī* that even though he had spent many years in the company of Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu in Puri as the protege of Svarūpa Dāmodāra, it was not until he came to Braj in 1535 that he was introduced to the concept of serving Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa as a mañjarī. Thus Raghunātha writes at the end of his *Muktā-carita*: "Holding straw in my teeth, I beg repeatedly to become a speck of dust at Rūpa's lotus feet, birth after birth."

In the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava school, Rūpa Gosvāmin and Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmin are particularly held to be the exemplars of worship in the mood of the mañjarīs. Of the two, Rūpa Gosvāmin is the guru of Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmin.

Rūpa's elder brother Sanātana describes himself as *Rādhā- dāsyecchuḥ*, "one who desires the service to Rādhā," in his *Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta* (2.1.21). The sum and substance of Sanātana's own commentary to the word *rādhā-dāsyecchuḥ* is that such a person desires only to be the servant of Madana Gopāla's most dear Rādhā. He considers that the obtention of such service is all perfection to him; from this all things even beyond his own desires are attained automatically. From this it is clear that service to Rādhā is the extraordinarily supreme great goal of spiritual life.

It is evident, then, that the subject matter of *Mañjarī-svarūpa-nirūpaṇa* rests on a presumed understanding of the entire corpus of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava theology, a post-graduate course, as it were. It is for this reason that the work, despite being published for the first time only in 1963, is of great value for those who seek an understanding of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism theology, without a knowledge of which misconceptions are bound to arise. Furthermore, since Kuñja Bihārī Dāsī used the model of Rūpa Gosvāmin's works on divine aesthetics as his model, it is difficult to understand this work without a knowledge of the language of the stheticians. The insufficiency of English to duplicate the subtle differences in the terms which are used for the various *sthāyi- bhāvas* is particularly noticeable. Words like "love", "feeling" or "affection" are customarily used to translate *prema*, *bhāva* or *sneha*, but the English words here do not reflect the hierarchical character that Rūpa

Gosvāmin intended for these terms. Other terms such as *rati*, *bhāva* and *sthāyī-bhāva* approximate each other, and are translated variously as the dominant mood, affection, love. They refer to the particular relational quality of the affective mood. Though these terms are to some extent explained in the text, the reader is advised to familiarize her or himself with the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* and *Ujjvala-nīlamanī*, which are the sources of this terminology.

In its original form, this translation was an English rendition of Kuñja Bihārī Dās Bābājī's *Mañjarī-svarūpa-nirūpaṇa* as well as a shorter supplement to that work, *Mañjarī-bhāva-sādhana-paddhati*, which is represented in this final version as chapters eight and nine, "The mañjarīs' sacred rapture in separation and in union" and "The practice that leads to becoming a handmaiden." Upon completion of the first draft, it was evident that there was some overlap in the two books and that there was a more natural way to integrate their contents. This led to more editing of the original text through the addition of (generally short) bridging comments which are not identified in the text as mine. Any footnotes in English are mine. Although I made a concerted effort to find the original texts for all references used by Kuñja Bihārī Dāsījī, some were regrettably never found.

Several Sanskrit and Bengali verses have been translated into English verse. At no time did I intend to translate all verse in this way, but I did not feel that these efforts diminished entirely the meaning of the originals and could not bring myself to reduce them to prose. For this I apologize.

## Acknowledgments

I first of all thank Ananta Dās Bābājī Mahārāj for approving the publication of this translation as well as for making his biography of his spiritual master available to me.

I would like to thank Neal Delmonico for doing a thorough re-edit of the introduction, which he first published in the rather short-lived review *Time after Time* in 1986. The use of English translations for the titles of Sanskrit and Bengali books is his innovation and I hope that he will forgive me for abandoning this convention in the later chapters. I am also indebted to Dr. Delmonico for his translation of the problematic word *rasa* as "sacred

rapture.” The Sanskrit term is multi-valenced and it should not be thought that any single English word could be used across the board as a synonym for it, yet for the greater part of this text, ”sacred rapture” at least adequately conveys rasa’s character as an ultimate religious experience.

Steve Rosen is also to be thanked for republishing the text of the introduction in *The Journal of Vaiṣṇava Studies*, thus bringing the same material to a wider audience including Sinisa Kosc (Rādhāśaraṇa Dāsa) of Zagreb, Croatia, whose letters inspired me to bring the entire text to publication.

An important note of thanks is reserved for Joseph O’Connell, of St. Michael’s College at the University of Toronto and to Katherine Young, professor of religious studies at McGill University, both of whom are masters in the art of friendship and encouragement.

It would also be inappropriate for me not to thank all those other teachers, too many to name, through whose kindness I possess the little knowledge I have. Knowing them all to be manifestations of the Paramātmā, I bow down to them in reverence.

And last, but not least, I thank my wife Anne, who always stands by me.

Jan Brzezinski

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पीयूषसारशिशिरानपि चन्द्रपादान्  
धीरान् मरन्दमधुरांश्च मधोः समीरान् ।  
वाञ्छन्ति के भुवि तथामृतसिन्धुपूरान्  
श्रीरूपपादकवितासुरसं निपीय ॥ 1 ॥

*pīyūṣa-sāra-śīśīrān api candra-pādān  
dhīrān maranda-madhurāṁś ca madhoḥ samīrān  
vāñchanti ke bhuvi tathāmṛta-sindhu-pūrān  
śrī-rūpa-pāda-kavitā-surasaṁ nipīya (1)*

After having drunk just once  
the delicious juice of Rūpa Gosvāmin’s poetry,  
who on this earth desires the rays of the moon,  
said to bring the dewy essence of ambrosia?



And who would wish  
for the sweet, dulcet breezes of spring  
or the waves of the ocean  
of the nectar of immortality?

पश्यन्ति के सुरबलि रमणीयतां तां  
मन्दाकिनी विकचकाञ्चनपद्मलक्ष्मी ।  
सम्पूर्णशारदसुधाकरमण्डलं वा  
श्रीरूपपादकवितासुरसं निपीय ॥ 2 ॥

*paśyanti ke sura-bali ramaṇīyatām tāṃ  
mandākinī vikaca-kāñcana-padma-lakṣmīm  
sampūrṇa-śārada-sudhākara-maṇḍalaṃ vā  
śrī-rūpa-pāda-kavitā-surasaṃ nipīya (2)*

After having drunk just once  
the delicious juice of Rūpa Gosvāmin's poetry,  
who would look upon the beauty  
of the garden of the gods,  
or upon the beauty of blooming golden lotus flowers  
in the Ganges of the heavens,  
or upon the disc of the full moon of autumn?

के वा रसालमुकुलेश्वलिञ्जैकृतानि  
शृण्वन्ति किन्नरवधूकलकण्ठनादान् ।  
कुञ्जेषु मञ्जुकलकोकिलकूजितं वा  
श्रीरूपपादकवितासुरसं निपीय ॥ 3 ॥

*ke vā rasāla-mukuleṣv ali-jhakṛtāni  
śṛṇvanti kinnara-vadhū-kala-kaṇṭhi-nādān  
kuñjeṣu mañju-kala-kokila-kūjitaṃ vā  
śrī-rūpa-pāda-kavitā-surasaṃ nipīya (3)*

And of those who have drunk just once  
the delicious juice of Rūpa Gosvāmin's poetry,

who would still listen to the sweet buzzing  
of the bees as they taste the mango flowers,  
or to the song of the wives of the heavenly choir,  
or the sweet song of the koīl in the forests?

# An Introduction to Mañjarī-bhāva

यस्य स्फूर्तिलवाङ्कुरेण लघुनप्यन्तर्मुनीनां मनः  
स्पृष्टं मोक्षसुखाद्विरज्यति झटत्यास्वाद्यमानादपि ।  
प्रेम्णस्तस्य मुकुन्द साहसितया शक्नोतु कः प्रार्थने  
भूयाज्जन्मनि जन्मनि प्रचयिनी किन्तु स्पृहाप्यत्र मे ॥<sup>1</sup>

Oh Mukunda, giver of liberation!  
Who in the world is there with the courage  
to pray for the gift of sacred love,  
of which the slightest manifestation,  
when brushing against the minds of the great sages,  
makes them forget the happiness of liberation?  
My prayer therefore to you is this:  
that I should simply desire for such *prema*,  
and that this desire should increase forever,  
in this world, birth after birth.

*yāra sphūrṭi lavāṅkura*  
*laghu haite laghupura*  
*sparsāmatra ātmārāma mane*  
*āsvādita mokṣasukha*  
*tatkāla kari vimukha*  
*līlāsvāde kare āsvādane*  
*ke hena sāhasī jana*

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<sup>1</sup>Attributed to Rūpa Gosvāmin, *Stavamālā*

*māge hena premadhana*  
*kintu eikariye prārthana*  
*se prema pābāra lāgi*  
*tṛṣṇātura anurāgī*  
*prabala utkaṇṭhā anukṣaṇa*  
*jalavinā yena mīna*  
*duḥkha pāya āyuhīna*  
*sei mata pipāsita haiyā*  
*cātaka jalada yaiche*  
*cakoracandrikā taiche*  
*raba anya sakala bhuliyā*<sup>2</sup>

Those self-satisfied sages who are directly experiencing the happiness of liberation immediately become indifferent to that pleasure simply upon coming into contact with the fractionally germinated seed of *prema*; what person is there in this world so bold that he would pray for such wealth? I, therefore, am praying only that always, in every one of my lives, I should constantly develop a great thirst and enthusiasm for attaining that great prize that I should remain forgetful of all else and thirst for it in the way that a fish plucked from its pond craves for a return to water, as a *cātaka* bird thirsts for the appearance of a cloud, or as the fabled *cakora* seeks the rays of the moon.

*Brahmānanda* is the name given to the joy found in the transcendentalist's realization of universal spiritual identity. This pleasure is so highly lauded by its proponents that it is said to make all worldly pleasure, even that of being an emperor or universal creator like Brahmā, appear completely insignificant. Yet this brahmānanda itself becomes an object of scorn for one who has attained the fortune of getting even the slightest scent of *kṛṣṇa-prema*, or love for Kṛṣṇa. *Prema* is therefore the ultimate goal of life, or the *prayojana-tattva*.

There are unlimited varieties of *prema*, but there is a vast difference in the measurement of these various types. According to Viśvanātha Cakravartī's commentary on the varieties of heroine in *The Blazing Sapphire* (*Ujjvala-nīlamanī*), the four measurements are: atomic, comparatively substantial,

<sup>2</sup>An unidentified Bengali verse translation of Rūpa's verse above.

great and exceedingly great.<sup>3</sup> In those persons whose devotional taste has not yet developed (*ajāta-ruci*), prema is present only in atomic quantity; the prema is only barely detectable and consequently, the Lord's giving of himself to such devotees is also just barely visible. At the opposite extreme, prema is found to be extremely great only in the person of the Queen of Vrindavan, Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. There, because prema is present in its fullest possible manifestation, Kṛṣṇa is also in complete subordination to her. Sacred love (prema) is great in all the residents of Vrindavan and therefore Lord Kṛṣṇa accepts the role of a subordinate to them also. The Lord submits himself to devotees like Nārada, in whom sacred love is greater or lesser, in proportion to their devotion. When the Lord consents to become a subordinate to his devotee, i.e., in a case where love is either great or exceedingly great, his majestic aspects remain completely hidden in the way that the potencies of a feudal baron, though relatively manifest before others, are subdued before in the presence of an emperor.

The strength of Rādhā's love is further eulogized in the *Jewel Box of Sacred Love* (*Prema-samputikā*, 54):

लोकद्वयात् स्वजनतः परतः स्वतो वा  
प्राणप्रियादपि सुमेरुसमा यदि स्युः ।  
क्लेशास्तदप्यतिबली सहसा विजित्य  
प्रेमैव तान् हरिर्भानिव पुष्टिमेति ॥

As a strong lion defeats many elephants  
and then becomes further nourished  
and strengthened by feeding on them,  
so too does sacred love,  
when exceedingly great,  
conquer all obstacles before it,  
whether they come from this world or the next,  
from enemies or from family members,  
from one's own body or the things connected to it,  
or even from that dearest one,

<sup>3</sup>From the commentary by Viśvanātha Cakravartī on Rūpa's *Ujjvala-nīlamanī*, 5.6. (ed.) Pandit Durgaprasad and Vasudeva Lakṣmana Śāstri Pansikar, reprinted (Delhi: Chaukhamba Sanskrit Pratishthan, 1985), 105.

who is the object of the love itself.  
 Even if those obstacles are as vast  
 as the immeasurable Mount Meru,  
 sacred love will conquer them,  
 and having conquered,  
 will become more strong and vital.

Sacred love is the essence of Kṛṣṇa's internal potency which is known as the *hlādinī* or bliss-giving energy.<sup>4</sup> This energy manifests in different types of devotees and therefore appears in four basic varieties known as servitorship, comradeship, guardianship and the sweetest affection known as "mistress-ship". This mistress-ship is called sweet love (*madhurā rati*) because it is the most relishable of the devotional emotions. It is of three types: common (*sādhāraṇī-rati*), compromising (*samañjasā-rati*), and competent (*samarthā-rati*). Of these three, the last is considered the most perfect. In the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* (1.2.283-86), Rūpa Gosvāmin has described this competent love as *kāma-rūpā-bhakti* or devotion which has the form or appearance of sexual attraction:

That devotion or love which makes the desire for sexual union submit to it and take on its own form, i.e., makes it function only for the purpose of Kṛṣṇa's pleasure, is known as *kāma-rūpā-bhakti*. Where such devotion exists, all efforts are made only for his happiness and never for one's own pleasure or satisfaction, even though externally or superficially this desire for Kṛṣṇa's pleasure may appear like a desire for one's own sexual satisfaction. This *kāma-rūpā-bhakti* is widely known to exist only in the cowherd girls of Vṛndāvana. Learned persons have given the name of sexual attraction (*kāma*) to the love of the cowherd girls for Kṛṣṇa because in the multifarious expressions of sweetness, such sports as embracing, kissing and other amorous activities take place. Even great devotees like Uddhava adore the spirit of the cowherd girls because it transforms the essentially selfish sexual desire into pure devotional love or desire for the Supreme Lord's sensual enjoyment. These devotees desire to attain that level of devotion, but remain forever unable.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup>Śrī Jīva, *Durga-saṅgaminī* on *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, 1.3.1.

<sup>5</sup>Brs, 1.2.283-6.

In *The Story of Gopāla* (*Gopāla-campū*)<sup>6</sup> and *The Treatise on Sacred Love* (*Prīti-sandarbhā*), Jīva Gosvāmin writes that the Lord gave Uddhava a position in his life in the spiritual world of Goloka, but even so, Uddhava was unable to obtain the form of a cowherd girl or the true identity of one.

This does not mean that Uddhava's position is not extremely elevated. According to the larger *Nectar of the Lord's Devotee* (*Bṛhad-Bhāgavatāmṛta*, 2.1.16), there are five kinds of devotees: (1) the devotee in knowledge (*jñāna-bhakta*), such as Bharata Mahārāja, (2) the pure devotee (*śuddha-bhakta*) like Ambarīṣa Mahārāja, (3) the devotee in sacred love (*prema-bhakta*) like Hanumān, (4) the devotee entirely fixed in sacred love (*prema-para-bhakta*) like the five Pāṇḍava brothers, and (5) the devotee completely absorbed in and moved by sacred love (*premātura-bhakta*) like the Yādavas, amongst whom the chief is Uddhava. Each of these divisions is superior to the one preceding it. Nevertheless, although Uddhava stands in this position as superior to all the above-mentioned devotees, he cannot attain to the ultimate standard of devotional sentiment which is known as the mood of the cowherd girl (*gopī-bhāva*).

Devotion to Kṛṣṇa in the form of sexual desire (*kāma-rūpā*) is further subdivided into two divisions. One entails desiring to be a mistress to Kṛṣṇa. This is called *sambhogeccchāmayī*, or devotion formed of the desire for a direct sexual relationship with the Lord. The second division is called *tad-bhāvecchātmikā* devotion arising out of a desire for the feelings of Rādhā, i.e., devotion which approves of and follows in the wake of the "leading lady's" affairs with her leading man, Kṛṣṇa. This second category is the one into which the devotion of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī's girlfriends (*sakhī-s*) falls.

Amongst Rādhārāṇī's girlfriends there are again several divisions, all of them belonging to the spirit of tad-bhāvecchātmikā devotion. Some of the girlfriends have equal love for both Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa; others are more inclined to either one or the other of the Divine Couple. Those who are more favorable to Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, Kṛṣṇa's leading lady, are known as *rādhā-snehādhikā*; these are also known as the *mañjarī-s*, or flower buds. Rūpa Gosvāmin has given their unique affection or devotional sentiment a special name, that of *bhāvollāsā-rati* (Brs., 2.5.228), for they consider themselves to be exclusively the maidservants of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, even over and above Śrī Kṛṣṇa himself.

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<sup>6</sup>Gc, ii.37.11.

Pure devotional service, the general definition of which is given at the beginning of the *Ocean of the Nectar of Sacred Rapture* (*Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, 1.1.6: *anyābhilāṣitā-śūnyam* ...), namely that it is completely free from any other desire, finds its most perfect actualization in this spirit of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī's maidservants, bhāvollāsā-rati.

The love of the cowherd girls of Vṛndāvana is called “competent” (samarthā) because it has the power to control Kṛṣṇa, to make him who is the Supreme Lord (“capable of doing anything he pleases, or of not doing it, or of changing from one mode of action to another according to his whim”) incapable of paying back the debt which he feels to them. He himself admits to this in the *Śrīmad-bhāgavata* (Bhāg., 10.32.22). Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī is the chief of Vṛndāvana's milk-maids; she is the presiding deity of this competent devotion. Nevertheless, she herself is incapable of creating any change or transformation in the determination of the mañjarīs to exclusively serve her, their mistress.<sup>7</sup> Even though she is the source and abode of the unlimited goddesses of fortune, she feels herself to be indebted to the mañjarīs. She is the reservoir of unlimited compassion and is always anxious to fulfill the desires of all the devotees, but the mañjarīs only desire is service to her, and they will have nothing else of her. These are confidential and difficult facts which are not known to all, secrets of which only the select few can comprehend.

In section 63 of *Prīti-sandarbha*, Jīva Gosvāmin has shown that the Supreme Lord enjoys four types of pleasure: one from simply being situated in his being, one which comes from his immeasurable opulences, another arises from his mind; and the last and best is that which is derived from the love of his devotees.<sup>8</sup>

In the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* (10.86.59), the Lord is described as the “devotee of his devotees.”<sup>9</sup> Similarly, it is written in the *Caitanya-bhāgavata* (3.2.478):

*kṛṣṇa tāhā pūrṇa kareṇa māge bhṛtya*  
*bhaktavāñchā pūrti bhinna nāhi anya kṛtya*

Kṛṣṇa gives whatever is prayed for by his servant. He has no activity other than to fulfill the desires of his devotees.

<sup>7</sup>See *Ujjvala-nīlamanī*, 8.88-9, *Vṛndāvana-mahimāmṛta*, 16.94.

<sup>8</sup>भगवदानन्दः खलु द्विधा स्वरूपानन्दः स्वरूपशक्त्यानन्दश्च । अन्तिमश्च द्विधा मानसानन्द ऐश्वर्यानन्दश्च । तत्रानेन तदीयेषु मानसानन्देषु भक्त्यानन्दस्य साम्राज्यं दर्शितम् ।

<sup>9</sup>भगवान् भक्तभक्तिमान्



Rūpa Mañjarī appeared as Rūpa Gosvāmin when Lord Gaurāṅga, the combined form of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa appeared on this earth. The following incident from his life will help make the above statement clearer. Rūpa Gosvāmin would perform his worship at a place called Tero Kadamba which lies halfway between Nanda Gram and Javat (Yāvaṭa) in the area of Braj. One day he thought to himself that if he only had some milk and sugar he could prepare some *khīr* (sweet condensed milk) to offer his deity and then serve it as sacred remnants (*prasāda*) to his spiritual master, Sanātana. A few moments later, a young girl came there carrying milk and sugar which she gave to him, telling him to make condensed milk (*khīr*) for his deity. Having done this she went away. Rūpa then did as he had been told; he boiled the sugar and milk down into the thick, condensed milk and offered it up to the Lord. Afterwards he gave the sacred remnants to Sanātana to enjoy. While Sanātana was eating, he was seized by uncontrolled spasms of ecstasy. When he had calmed down somewhat, he inquired from his brother where he had gotten his ingredients. Rūpa told him the story of the Vrajavāsī girl. Upon hearing the entire account, Sanātana became immediately aware that it had, in fact, been Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī herself who had come personally bearing gifts for them. Because Rādhā was their goddess and they were her servants, the proper relation of served and servant had been reversed. He therefore strictly forbade Rūpa from accepting such gifts in the future.<sup>10</sup>

Sanātana Gosvāmin called this servitude to Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī “the most unique and elevated of all spiritual goals” in his commentary on his own work, *The Nectar of the Lord’s Devotee* (2.1.21).<sup>11</sup> Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī, the spiritual guide of sixty thousand ascetics, elaborates on this idea in his *Nectar of the Greatness of Vṛndāvana* (2.35):

धन्यो लोके मुमुक्षुर्हरिभजनपरो धन्यधन्यस्ततोऽसौ  
 धन्यो यः कृष्णपादाम्बुजरतिपरमो रुक्मिणीशप्रियोऽतः ।  
 याशोदेयप्रियोऽतः सुबलसुहृदतः गोपिकान्ताप्रियोऽतः  
 श्रीमद्वृन्दावनेश्वर्यतिरसविवशाराधकः सर्वमूढूर्नि ॥

<sup>10</sup>Narahari Cakravartin, *Bhakti-ratnākara*, 5.1311-1330.

<sup>11</sup>तस्य सर्वसाधारणस्य परममहाफलस्य प्राप्तौ तदुचितम् सर्वसाधारणं परममहासाधनं निर्दिशति सङ्कीर्तयन्तीति ।

Glorious are those persons who desire to climb out of the well of material existence and attain liberation; even more glorious are they who have dedicated themselves to the service of the Lord. Even more elevated are those who have become attached to the lotus feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Those who love the husband of Queen Rukmiṇī are superior again to them; more praiseworthy still are those who are dear to the son of Yaśodā. More glorious again are those who have made friends with the comrade of Subala. More glorious again than them are those who worship the Lord as the lover of the gopīs. Yet standing at the head of all the devotees in creation are those whose thoughts have been washed away by the great flow of sacred rapture emanating from the daughter of King Vṛṣabhānu, Rādhā, and worship her above all.

That devotion which has been described in the introductory verse to the *Vidagdha-mādhava* (and then quoted in the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*) as “the most elevated of all sacred erotic raptures” is this affection of the girlfriends of Rādhārāṇī who care even more for her than they do for Kṛṣṇa himself. This bhāvollāsā-rati love which exults in the divine feelings (of Rādhā) is the crest-jewel of all mystic achievements. It is the special gift of Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s limitless mercy.

*unnata ujjvalarasa prema bhaktidhana  
kono kālē prabhu yāhā nā dena kakhana  
se dhana dibāre kaliyuge kṛpā kari  
yei deva avatīrṇa hemavarṇa dhari  
siṃha sama sei deva śacīra kumāra  
hr̥daya kandare tabha sphuru anibāra*<sup>12</sup>

अनर्पितचरीं चिरात् करुणयावतीर्णः कलौ  
समर्पयितुमुन्नतोज्ज्वलरसां स्वभक्तिश्रियं ।  
हरिः पुरटसुन्दरद्युतिकदम्बसन्दीपितः  
सदा हृदयकन्दरे स्फुरतु वः शचीनन्दनः ॥<sup>13</sup>

This elevated, effulgent, taste of sacred rapture

<sup>12</sup>An unidentified Bengali verse translation of the following verse by Rūpa Gosvāmin.

<sup>13</sup>Rūpa Gosvāmin, *Vidagdha-mādhava*, 1.2.

is the wealth of devotional love;  
 the Lord never gives it at any time;  
 yet, out of his mercy, he came in this Age of Quarrel  
 to distribute this treasure to the world,  
 becoming incarnate in his golden form.  
 The son of Śacī is like a lion;  
 may he dwell in your hearts forever.

Mahāprabhu infused all of his power into the heart of Rūpa Gosvāmin, his dearest associate, and had him reveal to the world what was actually his own heart's desire. In the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (2.19.105-7) it is said:

*kṛṣṇa-tattva bhakti-tattva rasa-tattva prānta  
 saba śikhāila prabhu bhāgavata siddhānta  
 rāmānanda pāśe yata siddhānta śunila  
 rūpe kṛpā kari tāhā saba sañcārila  
 śrīrūpa hṛdaye prabhu śakti sañcārila  
 sarvatattva nirūpaṇe pravīṇakarilā*

The Lord taught Rūpa the truths about Kṛṣṇa, devotion to him and sacred sthetics, as well as the conclusions of the *Bhāgavata*. Those conclusions which he had heard from Rāmānanda Rāya he compassionately infused into Rūpa. The Lord infused his power into the heart of Śrī Rūpa and made him expert in explaining all these truths.

श्रीचैतन्यमनोऽभीष्टं स्थापितं येन भूतले ।  
 सोऽयं रूपः कदा मह्यं ददाति स्वपदान्तिकम् ॥<sup>14</sup>

When will that Rūpa,  
 who has established on earth  
 the heart's desire of Śrī Caitanya,  
 bestow on me a place at his feet?

<sup>14</sup>Narottama Thākura, *Prema-bhakti-candrikā*, 2.

Caitanya Mahāprabhu himself resided in the whorl of Rūpa's lotus- like heart in the form of the raptures of the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* for the purpose of giving himself to the unfortunate souls of the world. As a result, Śrīla Rūpa Prabhu was able to produce two master works on the varieties of spiritual experience: *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* (*The Ocean of the Nectar of Sacred Rapture*), and the *Ujjvala-nīlamanī* (*The Blazing Sapphire*).

*dekhiyā nā dekhe tāre abhaktera gaṇa*  
*ulūke nā dekhe yaiche sūryera kiraṇa*<sup>15</sup>

The non-devotees cannot see directly what is before their eyes,  
 just as an owl is unable to see the bright rays of the sun.

In the twelfth verse of the *Manaḥ-śikṣā* (“Instructions to the Mind”), Raghunātha Dāsa writes:

मनःशिक्षादैकादशकवरमेतन्मधुरया  
 गिरा गायत्युच्चैः समधिगतसर्वार्थततिर्यः ।  
 सयूथः श्रीरूपानुग इह भवन् गोकुलवने  
 जनो राधाकृष्णातुलभजनरत्नं स लभते ॥

One who recites this poem becomes a follower of Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmin and his group and receives the jewel of worship of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa in the forest of Gokula.

Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa [Baṅgeśvara Vidyābhūṣaṇa ?] in his gloss on this verse expands the idea by saying:

One should follow in the footsteps of Rūpa Gosvāmin and his group (i.e., Śrī Gopāla Bhaṭṭa, Śrī Sanātana, Śrī Lokanātha, etc.) and live in Vṛndāvana serving Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. Because Rūpa, as his [Raghunātha Dāsa's] own guru, is recognized as the best, he is described as the leader of the group.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>15</sup>Cc, 1.3.69.

<sup>16</sup>सयूथः श्रीगोपालभट्टगोस्वामिश्रीसनातनगोस्वामिश्रीलोकनाथगोस्वामिप्रभृतियूथेन सह वर्तमानः स चासौ रूपश्चेति तस्यानुगः । श्रीरूपस्य स्वगुरुत्वेन श्रेष्ठत्वात् यूथाधिपत्वेनोक्तिः ।

Raghunātha Dāsa also designated Śrī Rūpa as the chief among the six Gosvāmins in another book, *The Story of the Pearls* (*Muktā-carita*, 1) where he writes the following final auspicious dedication:

आददाना रदैस्तृणमिदं याचे पुनः पुनः ।  
श्रीमदूपपदाम्बुजधूलिः स्यां जन्मजन्मनि ॥

Taking straw in my teeth,  
I make this one prayer again and again:  
May I become a piece of dust  
at Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmin's lotus feet,  
birth after birth.

The conclusion, therefore, is that if one wishes to get a full appreciation of the inner desires of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, then he should know that he has no other alternative but to follow whole-heartedly in the footsteps of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmin.

In *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* (3.6.2), the five chief types of sacred feelings are described with their component ingredients in an detailed fashion. There, sacred erotic love (*madhurā rati*) has been described as the most excellent; nevertheless, in spite of its excellence, it was described only briefly; the extensive description being reserved for *The Blazing Sapphire*. Rūpa himself explains why:

निवृत्तानुपयोगित्वाद् दुरुहत्वादयं रसः ।  
रहस्यत्वाच्च संक्षिप्य वितताङ्गोऽपि लिख्यते ॥<sup>17</sup>

Those renunciates who are excessively inclined to asceticism, those who are unable to distinguish between the erotic affairs of the material world and spiritual eros, and those who, although devotees, are indifferent to the erotic mysticism of the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*,

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<sup>17</sup>From Śrī Jīva's comm.: निवृत्तेषु प्राकृतशृङ्गाररससाम्यदृष्ट्या श्रीभागव-  
तादप्यस्मादसाद्विरक्तेष्वनुपयोगित्वाद् अयोग्यत्वात्. From Śrī Viśvanātha's comm.: तत्र  
हेतुत्रयमाह निवृत्तेषु प्राकृतशृङ्गाररससाम्यदृष्ट्या श्रीभागवतादप्यस्माद् रसाद्विरक्तेष्वनुपयोगित्वाद्  
अयोग्यत्वादित्यर्थः

are not qualified to hear about sacred erotic rapture, and since it is also esoteric and difficult to understand, it has been described here in only an abbreviated way although it is a huge topic.

In the above-mentioned two books of Rūpa Gosvāmin, the first division of erotic devotion called *sambhogecchā-mayī* (that of devotees who desire to be Kṛṣṇa's lovers) has been described extensively with all ingredients necessary for the production of its form of rapture, or the experience of transcendental emotion. However, the second division of this erotic devotion called *tad-bhāvecchātmikā* (the type consisting of a desire to share those feelings), which is the possession of the *sakhīs* and *mañjarīs*, who are imbued with a spirit of complete dedication and service to Rādhā, has not been described in such a far-reaching manner in any book. Still, some details of this type of devotion have been provided in those and a large number of other works, albeit somewhat obscurely. It would be a difficult task for an ordinary person to put these details together in an orderly fashion for contemplation, yet for the practitioners of the devotional life who yearn for the mystic perfection of direct service to the Divine Couple, knowledge of them is an absolute necessity. Without knowing these different characteristics, in what models would aspirants eager for the mood of a mañjarī take inspiration? By which moods would they find happiness and with whose feelings should they seek to empathize? For this reason, a complete familiarity with the dominant emotions, the specifiers, notifiers and so forth of the mañjarīs is an absolute necessity.

In the *Muralī-vilāsa* (*The Sport of the Flute*) (Chapter 6), Jāhnavā Ṭhākuraṇī replies to a question of her adopted son and disciple, Rāmāi Ṭhākura (Rāmacandra Gosvāmin) about the moods of the mañjarī:

Rāmāi Ṭhākura said, “Please continue. Tell me about this love called *bhāvollāsa*. Where is it found?”

Mother Jāhnavā answered, “Dear one, listen carefully. This *bhāvollāsa-rati* can only be found in the holy land of Vṛndāvana. The Lord's abode of Vṛndāvana is even beyond the reach of the gods. There, the ever youthful Divine Couple reigns supreme. Serving them rhapsodically day and night are hand-maidens like Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī and Śrī Anaṅga Mañjarī who possess this *bhāvollāsa-rati*.

The happiness of the Divine Couple is their happiness; they know nothing else. Always immersed in an ocean of bliss in the service of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, they are oblivious to time. Their love, which delights in feeling, like a companion mood, aims at giving pleasure to Kṛṣṇa; it feeds and nourishes the love between Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. They are all identical with Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī; they merely possess different bodies. One life, one soul, all are expansions of Rādhā. When she and her lover are at the height of rapturous intimacy and the hair stands erect on Rādhā's body, the very same phenomenon occurs on the bodies of her girlfriends. They experience seven times the pleasure that Rādhā does. Sometimes, on some excuse, she arranges their erotic meetings with Kṛṣṇa, seeing which her happiness increases thousands of times. This is a description of *bhāvollāsa* love, because of which the Lord said in the circle dance, 'I am unable to repay you gopīs for the love you have shown me.'"

The process of attaining *bhāvollāsa* love is described by Narottama Dāsa Ṭhākura in his famous *Moonbeam of Sacred Love* (*Prema-bhakti-candrikā*), Song One:

*yugala kiśora prema, yena lakṣa bāṇa hema,  
hena prema prakāśila yārā.  
jaya rūpa sanātana, deha more premadhana,  
se ratana mora gale hārā.  
prema bhakti rīti yata, nija granthe suvekata,  
kariyāchena dui mahāśaya.  
yāhāra śravaṇa haite, parānanda haya cite,  
yugala madhura rasāśraya.*

The love of the Divine Couple is as pure  
as gold refined thousands of times;  
may glory crown Rūpa and Sanātana  
who revealed this treasure to the world.  
Oh please be kind and give me that treasure of love  
and I will wear it as a pendant around my neck.  
In their books, these two great ones

have clearly shown all the intricacies of sacred love.  
 Hearing their works produces  
 the greatest joy in the heart  
 and shelter in the erotic rapture of the loving Couple.

In the *Stavāvalī* of Raghunātha Dāsa (*Svasaṅkalpa-prakāśa-stotra*, 1):

अनाराध्य राधापदाम्बोजरेनुम्  
 अनाश्रित्य वृन्दाटवीं तत्पदाङ्गां ।  
 असम्भाष्य तद्भावगम्भीरचित्तान्  
 कुतः श्यामसिन्धो रसस्यावगाहः ॥

Not ever having worshipped once the dust  
 that sprinkles from Śrīmatī's lotus feet;  
 not having taken shelter even once  
 of Vraja Dhām, marked with her dainty tread;  
 not ever having spoken with the souls  
 so laden with a weighty love for her  
 how foolish those who think that they can plunge  
 into the secret nectar sea of Śyāma!

And from the *Padyāvalī* (14),

कृष्णभक्तिरसभाविता मतिः क्रीयतां यदि कुतोऽपि लभ्यते ।  
 तत्र लौल्यमपि मूल्यमेकलं जन्मकोटिसुकृतैर्न लभ्यते ॥

Oh friend, if you should find it anywhere:  
 that heart absorbed in Kṛṣṇa rasa so rare  
 be quick to buy, how much the soul's in need!  
 In that bazaar is posted just one price;  
 millions of pious works will not suffice,  
 the only cost is paid in coins of greed.

Where does such spiritual greed come from? Rūpa Gosvāmin writes in  
*Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* (1.2.292):



तत्तत्भावादिमाधुर्ये श्रुते धीर्यदपेक्षते ।  
नात्र शास्त्रं न युक्तिञ्च तल्लोभोत्पत्तिलक्षणम् ॥<sup>18</sup>

When one has some perception, from hearing the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* or other books on the Lord's sports written by rapturous devotees, that all of Kṛṣṇa's senses are pleased by the feelings, beauty and qualities of the residents of Vraja such as Nanda and Yaśodā, an attitude arises that is indifferent to scripture or argument and is a symptom of the development of eagerness or greed (*lobha*). This attitude is, more specifically, the innate, spontaneous desire for the sweetness of those various moods: "May I also have the same kinds of feelings and qualities."

Even though spontaneous attraction to the mood of the residents of Vṛndāvana is so natural, not all persons develop it instantly upon first hearing about it. The *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (2.22.87) says: *tāhā śuni lubdha haya kono bhāgyavān*, "Some rare fortunate soul develops this greed when he hears the glories of the residents of Vrindavan."

One needs the mercy of a devotee endowed with this spirit himself and the candidate must be possessed of certain qualities on his own, a certain lucidity or clearness of mind, before such greed can appear. Therefore, Rūpa says in *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* (1.2.309) that it is *kṛpāikalabhyā*, "only available through the mercy of the Lord and his devotees."

In the *Bhakti-sandarbha* (*Treatise on Devotion*) (310), Śrī Jīva describes the development of greed in the following way:

A devotee whose heart is clear like a crystal will find that when the rays of the moon-like devotion of the residents of Vraja fall upon it, it lights up and takes on that glow itself, i.e., eagerness manifests itself in his heart. Then a curiosity about the dealings or feelings or passions of the eternally perfect residents of Vraja such as Nanda, Yaśodā, etc., arises in the practitioner. In other words a desire to know more about the patterns of their feelings occurs and he develops a taste or hunger for those patterns.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>18</sup>ब्रजवासिनां श्रीकृष्णे यः भावः तत्सजातीयभावाप्तये लोभः (चक्रवर्तिपादः) —  
शास्त्रयुक्तिनिरपेक्षतत्तद्भावादिमाधुर्याभिलसनं लोभोत्पत्तेर्लक्षणम् (मुकुन्ददासगोस्वामी)

<sup>19</sup>तादृशरागसुधाकराभाससमुल्लसितहृदयस्फुटीकमणेः साधकस्य तत्परिपाटीष्वपि रुचिर्जायते ।

The candidate who is qualified for practicing devotion in pursuit of erotic passion (*kāmānugā bhakti*) is further described in Rūpa Gosvāmin's *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* (1.2.300):

श्रीमूर्तिमाधुरीं प्रेक्ष्य तल्लीलां निशम्य वा ।  
तद्भावाकाङ्क्षिणो ये स्युस्तेषु साधनतानयोः ॥

Those who have seen the beauty of the image of the Lord or who have heard about his sports with his lovers, from their “falling in love” (*pūrva-rāga*) to the ecstasies of the circle dance, and who have become eager for the feelings of either the heroines or their friends are qualified for the practice of one of the two types of this form of devotion.

Jīva's commentary on this verse is as follows:

Previously [in verse 1.2.292], only the process of hearing was mentioned. Now it appears that it is necessary to see Kṛṣṇa's form also. Seeing Kṛṣṇa's images, certainly, is also dependent on hearing, for without hearing, there is no possibility that the Lord's beauty or activities will spring into reality. Moreover, even without seeing the image of the Lord, hearing of his sports will be effective.<sup>20</sup>

Who then is not qualified? Expanding on a previously quoted verse from *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* (3.5.2), Viṣṇu Dāsa writes in his commentary on *Ujjvala-nīlamanī* (1.2):

1. This spiritual discussion is unedifying for those who, though they are devotees of Kṛṣṇa, have no inclination toward erotic sacred rapture and for those who, considering the Lord's erotic dalliances to be the same as mundane sexuality, feel dispassion or lack any taste for them.

<sup>20</sup>तस्यास्तत्तद्भावादिमाधुर्यं निशम्य श्रुत्वा केवलं श्रवणं यत्पूर्वमुक्तं तत्र तु तस्याः प्रेक्षणेऽपि तस्य श्रवणस्य साहाय्यमवश्यं मृग्यत इत्यभिप्रेतं यद्विना मूलतत्तद्रूपलीलाद्यस्फूर्तः । तत्तल्लीलाश्रवणन्तु तत्तत्प्रेक्षणं विनापि कार्यकरम् ।

2. Although there are many devotees in erotic sacred rapture, still, not all of them, because they lack the proper aptitude, are proficient at tasting rapture. For them, this discussion is difficult to grasp.
3. It is improper to discuss this topic before those whose minds are deeply absorbed in the path of injunctions, who, because of having various tendencies, are by nature unaware of the path of passion. The superiority of the path of passion means, after all, that there are unlimited lesser natures unsuited for it.

This conception of the mañjarī is as difficult to comprehend as it is rare. Yet, as it is extremely important we have no other recourse than that of familiarizing ourselves with it. Although such a task is beyond the capabilities of an uneducated, foolish and most unqualified person such as myself, still, because of the indomitable influence of this holy land and of the blessings of the Vaiṣṇavas, who are all embodiments of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī's compassion, I have been inspired to take up this task with enthusiasm.





# Appendix A

## About the Author

The author of this book, Kuñja Bihārī Dās Bābājī, was a Tewari Brāhmaṇa from Meshya, a small village near Jhalda in the district of Purulia in north-western Bengal. He was born Kuñja Kishor Tewari on the Jhulan Purnima of 1896, the only son of Nilakamal Tewari and Muktamala Devi. He became interested in religious subject matters as a boy, learning the Bengali versions of *Mahābhārata* and *Rāmāyaṇa* from his uncle, Nilamadhab Tewari. It would appear that the Caitanyaite religion was not well known in the area at the time and his first religious attraction was to the *Rām-carit Mānas* of Tulasī Dās. It was only in the mid-1920's that he first encountered the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* with Rādhāvinoda Goswami's translation and commentary.

As is often the case in such circumstances, Kuñja Kishor's parents worried about their only son's religious interests and had him married at a young age in order to assure his commitment to the family.

Even though he had only limited formal education, Kuñja Kishor opened a primary school in his village where he taught for twenty years. His primary interests continued to be religious, but at the same time, he engaged his students in the nationalist (Svadeshi) movement by growing cotton and spinning it for the purpose of making homespun cloth. He was particularly influenced by Nibaran Chandra Dasgupta, the publisher of *Mukti* magazine, which was the main organ of the Congress party in the district. Nibaran Chandra was also a Vaiṣṇava who saw independence as a means for improving the status of the Caitanyaite religion. Kuñja Kishor was much influenced by his teaching, in particular, his attitude toward the proliferation of religious leaders in

Bengal claiming to be incarnations of God. He was also introduced by him to some of the more subtle aspects of the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* teachings.

In 1922, Nilakamal Tewari died. Kunja Kishor followed the obligatory mourning rituals ending with the *śrāddha* ceremony, but shortly thereafter he fell ill and for about eight months was repeatedly attacked by strong fevers. After this long illness, Kuñja Kishor underwent a period, which lasted for about a month and a half during the rainy season of 1923, of what he himself described as *unmāda*, "insanity". He experienced this time as one of great joy and liberty, claiming to have had visions of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa and hearing divine sounds, etc. In his later life looked back on this period as a precursor of his experiences as a adept in Rādhā Kuṇḍ.

In spite of all these distractions, Kuñja Kishor's school continued to be a success with many of its graduates going on to win scholarships for further study. Thus, though he tended to use the school as a platform for religious and political activity, there was little objection from the school inspectors. One of his stranger classroom practices was to keep a human skull, found in a field, on display in order to remind his students of the impermanence of life. Gradually, the school grew and a new building with the aspect of an ashram was erected in the middle of a field and was given the name Sevāśrama. A three-day Vaiṣṇava festival, which continues to be held there annually, was inaugurated by Kuñja Kishor's uncle Subal Chandra Tewari.

In the early 1930's, the influence of Sahajiya and Baul teachings began to be felt in the district and some close friends of the Tewari family also became members of these sects. Kuñja Kishor felt very fortunate to meet a Vṛndāvana Vaiṣṇava who was travelling in the area at the time. From him he learned about many aspects of Vaiṣṇava teaching as preserved in Vṛndāvana, including the disciplic succession and the importance of the *siddha-praṇālī* in Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava tradition. Kuñja Kishor had been initiated by Gopal Chandra Thakur Goswami of Jhalda when only ten or eleven years old. He now took steps to recover the knowledge of *siddha-praṇālī* which was the key to further advancement on the spiritual path. With renewed enthusiasm and armed with this deeper understanding of the orthodox tradition, he managed to convert several of his Sahajiya and Baul neighbours to the path of pure Vaiṣṇavism. This caused a stir and the Bauls started in a campaign of criticism against Vaiṣṇava orthodoxy. A great assembly was called together at the Sevāśrama in November, 1934, to establish the supremacy of the

orthodox movement. Many guest speakers from all over the Vaiṣṇava world were invited, led by the scholar Vrajendranath Chakravarti of Jhalda. The result of the meeting was that the influence in the district of the various Tantric subsects of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism was seriously impaired.

Unfortunately, only a few weeks after this success, Kuñja Kishor's wife died in childbirth. He continued his life as a teacher for several more years as he fulfilled his responsibilities towards his two daughters, Vinodinī Devī and Janakī Bālā, seeing to their education and marriage. During this time he continued to organize large assemblies in the name of the Gauḍīya-Vaiṣṇava-Dharma-Saṁrakṣiṇī Sabhā ("Council for the protection of the Gauḍīya-Vaiṣṇava religion"). Those who had been initiated were encouraged to find out their siddha-praṇālī, while those who were initiated in heterodox movements were encouraged to seek reinitiation. He collected money so that *mṛdaṅga* and kīrtana classes could be given at Sevāśrama and formed a kīrtana group with the students who participated.

Word of Kuñja Kishor's close adherence to the Vṛndāvana orthodoxy reached the ears of Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Dās Bābājī of Rādhā Kuṇḍ, also originally from Jhalda, who wrote to him saying that he felt that Kuñja Kishor must have been a friend of his through many lives. The kindness of a great monk like Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Dāsī had a deep effect on Kuñja Kishor and his interest in material life diminished further. In 1937, during the Kumbha period (mid-winter), he went to Rādhā Kuṇḍ for a month's holiday and accepted Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Dāsī as his *śikṣā-guru*, taking the Pañca-tattva and other mantras from him, as well as instructions about worship. Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Dāsī died a year later.

In 1939, Kuñja Kishor went back to Braj with his mother, this time for good. He was immediately initiated into the renounced order of life by the renowned scholar Advaita Dās Bābājī of Govardhan, receiving the name Kuñja Bihārī Dās Bābājī. A few months later his mother also took the renounced order from Advaita Dāsī, receiving the name Mādhavī Dāsī. She continued to live in a room near the Gopa Kuwā at Śyām Kuṇḍ before dying in 1944.

Kuñja Bihārī Dāsī found a cottage at Brajānanda Gherā, and with the help of donations received from his countrymen, he was able to greatly improve the building. In it, he established a publishing house which he named the Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Śāstra Mandir after his śikṣā-guru. He published not



only numerous books such as *Bhavakūpe Jīver Gati*, *Paratattva Sammukhya*, *Bhakti-kalpa-latā*, *Bhakti-rasa-prasaṅga* and *Mañjarī-svarūpa-nirūpaṇa*, but many paintings and charts as well. The well-known scholar of Vaiṣṇava history and Bengali literature, Biman Bihari Majumdar, used *Bhakti-rasa-prasaṅga* as a required text for his M.A. course at the University of Patna.

In his introduction to the *Mañjarī-svarūpa-nirūpaṇa*, Kuñjavihārī Dāsī writes that his first acquaintance with the mood of the mañjarī was through his renunciation guru, Śrī Advaita Dāsa Bābājī of Govardhana, whom he called the foremost scholar of the Vaiṣṇava world, especially in the matter of sacred sthetics or rapture. From that time on he became especially interested in the subject and began collecting references to the mood of the mañjarī whenever he came across them, paying special attention to the different ingredients necessary to produce the experience of sacred rapture in that mood. Later on, he had the opportunity to live for a long time with another great scholar and resident of Rādhā Kuṇḍ, Dīnaśaraṇa Dāsa Bābājī, and was able to study thoroughly all the literature on the subject. During that time, most of the materials found in this book were compiled. Later, other residents of the Kuṇḍ gave their encouragement and through financial help received from a number of sources, these materials were published as *An Inquiry into the Nature of Rādhā's Handmaids*.

Kuñja Bihārī Dāsī made a great number of disciples, several of whom later became abbots of Rādhā Kuṇḍ. His most celebrated disciple, Ananta Dās Bābājī, is a great scholar in his own right, who has published numerous works from the Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Śāstra Mandir. Kuñja Bihārī Dās's influence continues to be felt in his homeland which its inhabitants identify with Jharikhand, the wild jungle country through which Caitanya passed on his way from Purī to Vṛndāvana in 1513, avoiding the more frequented route along the Ganges. The proportion of bābājīs living in Rādhā Kuṇḍ who come from the westernmost part of Bengal is well over 50%. Vaiṣṇavism in Puruliya district (where I had the opportunity to go in the winters of 1983 and 1984) continues to bear the strong stamp of the practices found in Rādhā Kuṇḍ.